

continued, for example, the Summer Reading Program and networking efforts. There were some services that the participants clearly appreciated and wanted strengthened such as the continuing education and the public library statistics. There were some services that the participants wanted substantially altered such as consulting services, or discontinued, such as the Quiz Bowl. And finally, there were some new services that the participants wanted such as assistance with construction projects.

State Library staff members told the consultants that they believed that regional assignments are a strength of the Library Development program. They were not aware of the opinion expressed by library directors in the focus groups that the directors would prefer less general consulting and geographic assignments. The staff did feel that the visits in their geographic areas were particularly helpful in keeping the State Library consultants informed about activities and issues at the local level and thus prevent them from becoming isolated in Raleigh.

The State Library might consider an alternative configuration. This might include subject specialists who are available to public libraries throughout the state and who travel to the local area to provide specialized services. In addition, some generalists who have experience as library directors might provide special services to new library directors and to smaller or rural public libraries. It may not be possible for such changes to occur immediately but rather, over time as resources permit, to rearrange job assignments and make use of contract consultants to meet constituent needs.

There is an endorsement for the State Library to play a strong leadership and advocacy role. This issue of advocacy as a State Library role came up in both the Public Library Development focus groups and the Interlibrary Cooperation focus groups. The public library focus groups were looking for leadership particularly with the legislature. The Interlibrary Cooperation focus groups wanted leadership in planning, establishing, coordinating, and funding a statewide electronic network including setting standards for content and participation. Librarians within the state, regardless of type of library, see the State Library as playing a leadership role in bringing about change and in getting state support.

2) Differences among Public Libraries

Key Findings

Three different categories were mentioned in the focus groups as needing special assistance. Smaller libraries were identified as needing more "hand-holding", particularly preparing them for participation in the electronic information network. Rural librarians expressed a need for additional assistance to overcome barriers of distance. This was mentioned particularly in the area of continuing education where participants wanted CE delivered face-to-face in regional locations, or packaged with videos, handouts, etc. so that local libraries could deliver it themselves. They specifically did not wish to drive to Raleigh